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**ADV 290**

**Campaign Analysis**

### **Active Minds**

For our campaign analysis, Our focus will be centered around the UIUC chapter of *Active Minds* and their various projects on campus to raise awareness of key mental health issues in the younger generation. Active Minds is a nonprofit organization committed to “supporting mental health awareness and education for young adults” (Active Minds). Their central goal is to enable the youth to decrease the shame encompassing emotional well-being, create networks of help, and save lives. We interviewed one of the members of Active Minds’ executive board members, Gabriella Dumo, about the tactics employed by their chapter for campaigns, exhibitions, and social media.

Active Minds UIUC is run by their executive board consisting of Colin Heeneman, Rashmi Ghonsaghi, and Gabriella Dumo. As we interviewed Gabriella, we asked her not only about the campaign, but about the structure of the organization, on campus and beyond. Active Minds UIUC is one chapter of a nation-wide organization that has chapters at a number of universities across the country.

The chapter is divided into three committees, each committed to providing different functions and working in tandem to ensure the success of their mental health campaigns. There is the Projects Committee that generates and pursues new ideas that support the mission of the organization. The Volunteering and Fundraising Committee that is in charge of organizing volunteers, holding fundraising events, and connecting with the community. The Outreach

Committee is in charge of spreading the mission and message of the organization across campus and collaborating with other Registered Student Organizations. For the purposes of our campaign analysis we are focusing on the Projects and Outreach committees as they are in charge of employing their campaign tactics across a variety of mediums on campus. Like most other organizations across campus, Active Minds experienced some difficulty in executing their campaign tactics across campus over the past year and a half. As a result of that we are highlighting their use of social media to spread their message, as well as some on campus events and exhibitions employed pre-pandemic.

Since we are focusing on a smaller-scale campaign, the use of influencers is somewhat unconventional as they work with members of the student population to spread their message. In this course we have discussed nano influencers, social media personalities with under 10,000 followers on any given platform, and can see these students as an example.

As it pertains to their own social media, the chapter has about 1,000 followers on their Instagram and use their followers and chapter members as influencers as they often have Instagram story takeovers with members of the organization and encourage their followers to post the content produced by Active Minds on their personal social media. With the size of this campaign and a more local target audience, it is a logical conclusion that they would collaborate with members of the community to promote their message, events, and campaigns. The smaller creators not only allow the message to seem more personal and connect more with the audience, but these influencers are using their social media to connect with people that they know. This rapport allows the message to be better received by their publics.

With social media being a recent focal point of the campaign, it is a rather straightforward and simple process to measure the success of the campaign as their Instagram allows them to view their metrics: likes, comments, shares, views, etc. In previous years, in addition to their social media presence, they have held events and demonstrations.

Active Minds has worked tirelessly on campus to promote mental health campaigns. As previously noted, over the past few years they have run an initiative focusing on suicide prevention. One of the tactics the chapter used last fall was a suicide awareness exhibition on the South Quad by the bell tower; The members of the student organization placed 1,100 yellow flags all over the quad in order to symbolize the 1,100 students each year that take their own life in the United States. After the COVID-19 pandemic they have worked tirelessly to push for policy change at UIUC. They want to raise awareness on the disparity between counselors and students. On the University of Illinois's campus there are about 55,000 students and only about 30 counselors or social workers available.

In addition to the suicide awareness exhibition, they also created an initiative to involve the university and have them align with their mission. Active Minds worked with our student government to convince the university to include the National Suicide Prevention Hotline on the back of the iCards. They wrote many letters to certain people within the administration to make these changes. Despite their work, when the university passed the changes of having the Suiucide Prevention Hotlines put on the iCard, they didn't give Active Minds any of the credit.

Another way Active Minds works with the campus community is by holding General Body Meetings, which while they are geared to current members of the organization, are open to

anyone who wants to come. Anyone can come and learn about a new mental health related topic as it changes every meeting. There is no particular reason for the topic that is chosen, but every week the executive board meets and figures out relevant conversation topics to have each meeting. For example, before Thanksgiving break they had a General Body Meeting and they acknowledged that Thanksgiving can bring up a lot of issues that people have with eating, body image, and being around family. In the GBM they discussed topics like eating disorders, body dysmorphia & body image as a whole. GBM's are advertised through Active Minds social media platforms and from there they are shared by nano influencers to spread the word further.

On a more nation wide scale Active Minds have collaborated with larger influencers and groups of young leaders to expand the awareness around mental health related issues further beyond college campuses. The organization is dedicated to educating as many young people as possible with their Mental Health Campaigns. Active minds partnership with Club Unity was one of these methods. Active Minds established a multi-year partnership with Club Unity which consisted of a board composed of young leaders, uniting the actors, dancers, singers, and athletes of today in an effort to support young voices. Some of these young leaders included people such as Halima Aden, humanitarian and former fashion model as well as Atlanta Hawks basketball player Trae Young and Dancer, Maddie Ziegler. All of these individuals use snapchat to open up about their own mental health journeys and encourage young people to take steps to do the same. The collaboration between Active Minds and Club Unity encourages a wider reach and as a result, it can change the way mental health is perceived in today's society.

Charli and Dixie D'Amelio have recently been seen competing in an Active Minds X Snapchat original series 'Charli VS Dixie'. This Snapchat competition showcases the D'amelio

sisters sharing personal experiences with mental health. Mental health is becoming an ever-present topic of discussion in the media as we have seen celebs like Simone Biles, Meghan Markle, Demi Lovato, and many more celebs open up about their experiences with mental health. It can be seen as almost a trend to talk about topics like this so brand partnerships like the one between Active Minds and the d'Amelio sisters can be seen as beneficial to both the influencers and the organization as it creates brand recognition while also tackling the stigma that exists around Mental Health related issues in today's society.

In conclusion, Active Minds utilises social media influencers in a very positive light to help combat the stigma and enhance awareness associated with young people's Mental Health. Post after post and campaign after campaign, Active Minds is helping to achieve their goal of “spreading the word that seeking help is a sign of strength and not something to be ashamed of” (Active Minds).

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